

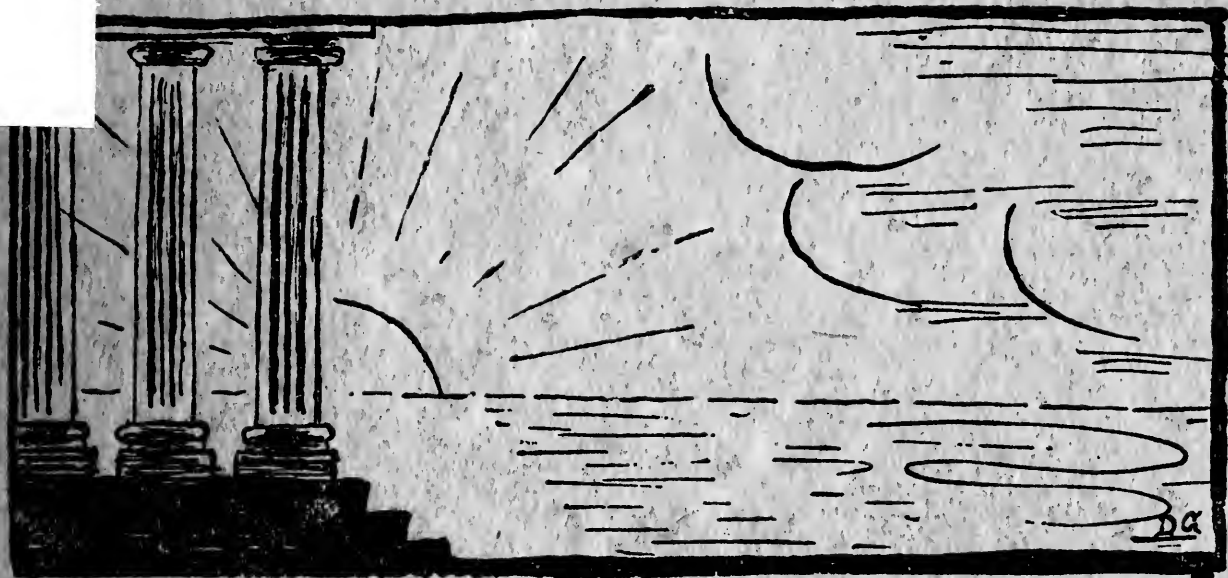
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# SONNETS



## OF THE DAY

*by*

DOUGLAS GREENWOOD



# SONNETS OF THE DAY

BY

DOUGLAS GREENWOOD



PS 3513  
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1919

## DEDICATION

"A ciascun alma presa e gentil core."

—*Dante.*

Translation:

"To every captive soul and gentle heart."

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JUN 18 1919

no 1

## In the Open Tower

Dreaming she lies, yet wakes to some sweet thing,  
Drawn beyond sleep, and on a sunnier tide  
Than glimmering night reveals. Her lips divide  
As if some eager joy that loves to cling  
Had kissed them so. The calm air's murmuring  
Is music in her thought beneath the wide  
Blue heaven's deep height. She is the very bride  
And goddess of love's lonely tarrying.

Self-singing songs which the heart listening hears  
And loses in effacing joy, have never  
Told all the thought in which she meets her lover;  
For this is she for whom all songs forever  
Kindle new fire, and the mute hours discover  
Pulsations of innumerable years.

M.E.W. - 4 Dec 19

## Ladder of Dreams

O never yet, for any home of youth,  
Have I so wearied in my wanderings,  
As for a vague and drifting house, which stands  
Among the fairy clouds of dream and truth,  
Builded on winds that drift above the sands,  
Haunted by sound of doves, by glimmering wings  
Lightly overshadowed, little known to praise,  
Or planned for building. Still it waits my hands.  
Though it be builded high, yet I will raise  
An Earth beneath it; and if it should hold,  
Imprisoned as in latency, a being  
Lovelier than thought, will set a crown of days,  
Golden with dawn there to the end, all freeing  
Joy to itself, so found as from of old.

## Weird Weather

I would have music; at this hour would hear  
Music and singing. For the hour has no mate,  
And the deep air is blue and passionate,  
And nowhere has the day, yet everywhere,  
A heart and soul, which is but ours, and here  
Resumes for us the interrupted state  
Of a whole World's vast paradise, elate  
With terrible splendors, on a broken stair  
Twixt Heaven and Earth. . . . In some forgotten time,  
Or in deep dreams that come in April weather,  
We wandered on such hills as these together,  
And drank, in sleep, the poison of such flowers  
As grow just here; and felt such pausing hours  
Enfold the solemn splendor of this clime.

# Death

In the still hour of dawn came close to me  
Death upon wings of easy motion flying,  
Death, like a presence and a mystery  
Growing to strange new visibility;  
And smiled amid his radiance, and said:  
“Desire me not too much, though love seem dead,  
And you may know me gentle to the dying.”

“You are the lord of broken hearts,” I said,  
‘Of fading flower, spent river, fallen head,  
And dying day. In our divided lot  
We share one calm, one hope, one knowledge, never  
Changing our will.”

Then said he: “Seek me not.  
I, the revealer of new life and thought,  
Will come as the reward of your endeavor.”



## Cité d'Orphée

Each hour, by thought and word, and deed, we give  
Power to the best or worst. We cannot cease  
To build and fashion, while 'Time's moments live  
And space is wide, dungeons or palaces.  
The past is rich in ruin of such; and they,  
The sceptre-bearers in the realm of song,  
Who to Apollo's deity belong,  
Have built imperishably. A splendor glows  
In the far future, where, from hills of dawn,  
Issues a river. There the orphic sound  
Of a wise singing raises visibly  
The fabric of a vision fair to see,  
And kindles fire of flowers upon a lawn  
Which for mere happiness is holy ground.

## By the Shore—Nocturne

Through leagues of darkness, like an emptied bowl,  
Which held white fire, the new moon leans a rim  
Of silver light. Flowers close, as hues grow dim  
To closing eyes. Quiet unites the whole.  
A while since, on a western oriole,  
Flamed the low Sun; and a nun's evening hymn  
Summoned the faces of the cherubim,  
Till night received the hush of that mute soul;  
And still, in dream, the faces shone. . . . But I  
Have not that quiet. Sounds recede, and die,  
Receding further; night is conscious, close  
About its hidden things in their repose;  
But I seek love, framed as in far-away  
Intense eternal ever-springing day.

## Aftermath

The garden of the past was desolate,  
Its flowers all withered, and its sunshine low  
Wan as late moonlight upon twilight snow.  
From interdiction and the storm of Fate  
Ruin remained; and though all winds abate  
There is no peace after such rage.

But now

Is come decay of ruin; and bright winds blow  
Over the mellowing crumbled house. The gate  
Lies amid flowers; dawn richens; thrushes mate;  
The wind-stirred grass is tall and ripe to mow.

At sunset twittering swallows wheel and soar  
Round the grey tower high up in evening air.  
The twilight has a dawn of hope, a stair  
Leading through delicate cloud, an airy shore  
With a good haven, where my thoughts behold  
Sweet singing sorrows, clad in cloth of gold.

# To the Majority

## *I. The Home Truth*

If Nature will not yield the boon she bears,  
If the Earth groans with misery and grieves;  
If Christ is crucified between two thieves  
On each of all the days of all the years;  
If strange confusions multiply, and fears  
Confound in darkness all that man achieves;  
If man knows not the pattern that he weaves,  
And kens not well the harbor that he nears;  
If childhood is a thing of little worth,  
And manhood bought and sold and cast aside;  
If woman is the plaything or the bride  
Of such a wretched wastrel of the Earth,  
Whose fault—by whose permission and decree  
But yours and yours who *will* not to be free?

# To the Majority

## *II. Confession*

The crime of crimes is ours that we have given  
Connivance—lawyers, priests and lowly men—  
To ours and others grief under all Heaven,  
Over all Earth. What help is for us then?  
We have slain the best; and those who might have been  
Gentle, have we made captive before birth  
Through anguished mothers;—through vile slums obscene  
And mart and factory we have grieved the Earth.  
By our connivance have we lured to crime  
The weak; and punished them in cruel fear  
And greed and ignorance, we who might have taught—  
Would we have learned it—all the joy of time.—  
O we, “the People,” who are censured here,  
Is all our sloth and wickedness as naught?

# A Message of May

## *I. Freedom*

You know what freedom is? It is to be  
Ushered in welcome from the shadowy land  
Of the unborn; first, among children, free,  
To learn the living present; understand  
The past, and glimpse the future so, and bear,  
Free among men, the burden of life and love,  
Strengthened for labor, glad for pleasure, dear  
To those who honor the Earth and skies above.

It is to be what Freedom's self can make  
Only a few till all alike are free.  
For us it means to be as lulled awake  
In that wise future—knowing what men shall be  
When one man wills another to be free—  
And therefore glad to suffer for their sake.

# A Message of May

## *II. Confidence*

There shall not come redemption out of chains  
Till you and I have conquered the vague power  
Which is their slave who bind us, bred of pains  
Dreaded and suffered long; and in this hour  
Felt near us like the insolence of shame.  
It is not fear, yet like the shadow of fear,  
Whispers discouragement—its better name  
Doubt: let it vanish now the dawn is near.

Have we not speech and patience? Is there not  
Cohesion in the life of living things?  
The Sun and Moon are partners in our lot;  
Swiftness and slowness both; Nature has wings  
To hasten purposes; and power she brings  
Is strong to serve an overruling thought.

# A Message of May

## *III. Rumor of Pan*

O comrades of the dawn, co-workers good,  
Whose blood was spilt far down into the night  
On journeying winds, O Human Brotherhood  
Whose heart and mind has sensed a fair delight  
Beneath all sorrow—when deep organs blow  
Musical thunder, and bright dancing comes  
Through shadowed air, or when huge clouds and slow  
Unstore their lightning, and the first rain drums,  
Quick-pattering—feel as now the hush and stir  
And preparation of things that pause, and wait  
Completion of an effort long put forth.  
There may be tumult ere the winds abate;  
There *is* confusion over south and north;  
But nature is restored—be glad with her.



# A Message of May

## *IV. Ideality*

It was not for a vain and foolish whim  
That Liberty was named a woman—she,  
Nature divine, is gentle mother of him,  
And sweeter than the face of man may be,  
Her face. And though strange gods have lured, and vile  
Worms of the mire, and tenfold blasphemies  
Have been his idols, and confused awhile  
Our song—yet there shall come of cleansing seas  
To shining shores this beautiful-footed one,  
Belovéd more than Aphrodite, and set,  
Against all darkness lucent as the Sun,  
Within whose light, as hers, are all things met,  
As in one life which knows not to forget,  
But is the Universe, and is alone.

# A Message of May

## *V. Realization*

O listen! you to whom strange life were sweet.  
The land shall grow so fair that it shall seem  
That light of heaven is gold before our feet  
Over red earth. The happiness of dream,  
And things remote, shall come to dwell with us;  
The great desire of bleeding hearts shall come,  
(Music more sweet than of the angelus)  
And make amid our folded hills a home.

Things perfected in thought and dream shall be  
Gardened and builded so that one may guess,  
Approaching, from one city's loveliness,  
The whole land's beauty, and how sweet love is,  
How calm old age there—as if Earth, made free,  
Glided in sunshine of a sea of bliss.

## Kings

Whom shall we honor, now the shadows flee,  
And darkness, like a wind, gathers away  
The kings, whom all their delegated sway  
Fast follows? With what crown of majesty  
Would they be crowned who know to set men free?  
Shall we not better bring, with them, the day,  
Remembering night; and seek within, as they,  
The increasing and slow dawn, as once did he  
For whom the temple veil was rent, whose lips  
Were sealed as in the darkness of eclipse;  
Who feared no hell; and wore on Earth no crown  
Save one of thorns; whom the World sees and hears  
Dimly as men in dream see tower and town—  
And may not love, confused with many fears.

## Multitudes

I cannot lose the pitiful faces, going  
In throngs or singly by. I will bid spare,  
For pity of these even those who strip them bare.  
In time of storm I, utterly well knowing  
Folly of vengeance, will be strong in showing  
Kindness to them; and will have special care  
Of those they love. I will not give despair  
Victim for victim when the light is growing.

The shut heart which contains the hard thing greed;  
The mind which closes eyes and ears, and toils  
Most in that service, these are known to me,  
Loathsome; yet even such would I set free.  
It is enough that they should lose the spoils;  
It is enough that all have help at need.

## The Time of Trouble

They pass forever, going whence they came,  
The lords of night. They pass, to be of those  
Who but remember the unnumbered woes  
Whose fruit they leave, that and their fall, the same  
Sorrow in double shape, two griefs. Their name,  
Louder than Liberty's, till she uprose,  
Triumphant after countless overthrows,  
Is darkened in the splendor of her fame.

The greed that led them, and the slaves who follow,  
See one another now. The hills are loud  
In the grey dawn, with testing of things hollow.  
The old reliable fraud had witnesses.  
And a new storm prepares, a gathering cloud  
Wakens low thunders in the mute abyss.

## To a Certain Respectable Man

You love life well.—Why, live then! Grope, and twine  
Around your mean desires; and prize each well  
Of all the things you grasp; and feed the swine,  
Fat in your heart. There is no deeper hell  
Than these things lost—when you have failed to win  
One lasting joy. And when you die you'll meet  
God—and the devil—both yourself, your sin  
And its accuser, face to face. And then  
I think you'll front your victims in the street,  
Whom your sloth would not aid, your narrow scorn  
Of careful thought refused to understand.  
And you will wish that you had not been born,  
And hate your greed, and see upon your hand  
The blood of those you called your fellow men.

## To a Certain Clergyman

They have done this thing, you say, and have no merit  
To win our mercy now. You are wild it seems.  
Out of the primal dark do you inherit  
A mind like this. Your glance fixates and gleams,  
Suddenly savage. You would make a pen  
Of a whole nation, where the weak must cry  
In helpless wretchedness. Those were not men;  
These are one blood with the cruel monsters. Aye!  
But who is guiltless? which the nation free  
From such attaint in death of those who die  
In the land's home, our own and not another's?  
They—without words, with hands and feeble cry,  
While for themselves they beg, and for their mothers,  
Beg mercy for all dumb things constantly.

## The Masters

They never will forsake us, those who grew  
Great in their hearts forever. They retain  
The memory of our intermittent pain,  
And of their own Gethsemene's garden dew.  
They are not wrath with us, though we are few  
And slow in our response, not knowing the gain,  
The loss not knowing. . . . Far across the plain  
Rises the mountain. . . . And to strive anew;  
To emulate their service to the power  
Which lives within us like a still white flower;  
To unweave imagined spells, the barriers  
Between the inner and the outer heaven;  
And so give Truth the tribute that is hers;  
This is to conquer, this to be forgiven.



## Easternight

Lilies and lights about a crucifix  
At Easter; and a clear face beautiful  
That shines against the light, and seems to have  
Immanent radiance. A remote sweet chime  
Of bell notes from the clouds comes suddenly. . . .  
Wave on wave a glory thrills and goes  
Through that still face, those mystic eyes and glad. . . .  
Beautiful dreamer, could it make it less  
If you should know of your own loveliness?  
These flowers, this joy, this music, this white peace  
Are with you, of you, show themselves in you,  
The sweetest song, the fairest flower of all,  
Madonna.

## Afterword

The foregoing sonnets, with the exception of "The Home Truth," "By the Shore," and "Easternight," were written within the month following April 12th, 1919; and "Cité d'Orphée," "Weird Weather," "The Time of Trouble," and "Multitudes" were written during the train journey from Chattanooga, Tenn., to Oteen, near Asheville, N. C., where the writer is doing duty as sergeant, M.D.

The writer is a Canadian by birth; English, Irish, and Scots by descent; a traveller by occasional inclination, having circled the Globe. He holds theosophical views. What his politico-economic, and social ideas are it is needless to say.



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